

West Malling Bus Pilot Consultation Report

March 2019



Public Consultation:

22 January – 19 February 2019

Alternative Formats

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

From June to August 2018, Kent County Council (KCC) held a county wide consultation, the Big Conversation, with communities and transport providers to explore innovative and sustainable ways of providing transport to rural communities in Kent. Despite ever-decreasing funding for local councils, we want to maintain and improve accessibility for those without an alternative means of travel in rural areas.

We have used the results to develop a number of pilot schemes to test out the ideas and help shape the future delivery of public transport. The most popular idea in the Big Conversation consultation was a feeder service.

The feeder bus picks up passengers from villages in rural communities and then drops them off at a bus stop to transfer on to a commercial service to finish their journey. This type of service makes good use of regular, high frequency commercial bus services to provide more frequent bus services to rural communities.

One of these pilots proposes making changes to the 58 service, which we already support, in order to improve it to see if we can make it more sustainable by converting it into a feeder bus. The pilot scheme is proposed to run from June 2019 - June 2020.

From 22 January to 19 February 2019, Kent County Council (KCC) consulted on proposed changes to bus services in the West Malling area. **This document focuses on the consultation responses for changes to the 58 service in West Malling.**

1.2. Purpose of the Consultation

The purpose of the public consultation was to inform the public and stakeholder organisations about the detail of the changes proposed and provide them with the opportunity to 'Have their say' and gain feedback on any potential impacts. The consultation gave the opportunity to:

- Understand why changes to the service 58 are proposed.
- Consider the possible impacts and benefits of the proposals.
- Ask us questions and provide views on the proposals.
- Advise KCC of any particular equality impacts the changes could cause.

1.3. Purpose of this Report

This report presents the analysis and findings of the responses to the public consultation on the proposals.

In addition, the report summarises the consultation process and the engagement and promotional activities that took place. The report also states how the feedback will be used to progress the proposal and identifies the next steps.

This report will be published and presented to the KCC's Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee and Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport & Waste, who will make a final decision on whether or not to proceed with the changes.

2. Consultation Process

This chapter outlines the process followed to deliver the consultation and details the activities and documentation developed to support the delivery of the consultation. The consultation was divided into the five stages shown in Figure 2.1. Detailed information on each section is given below.

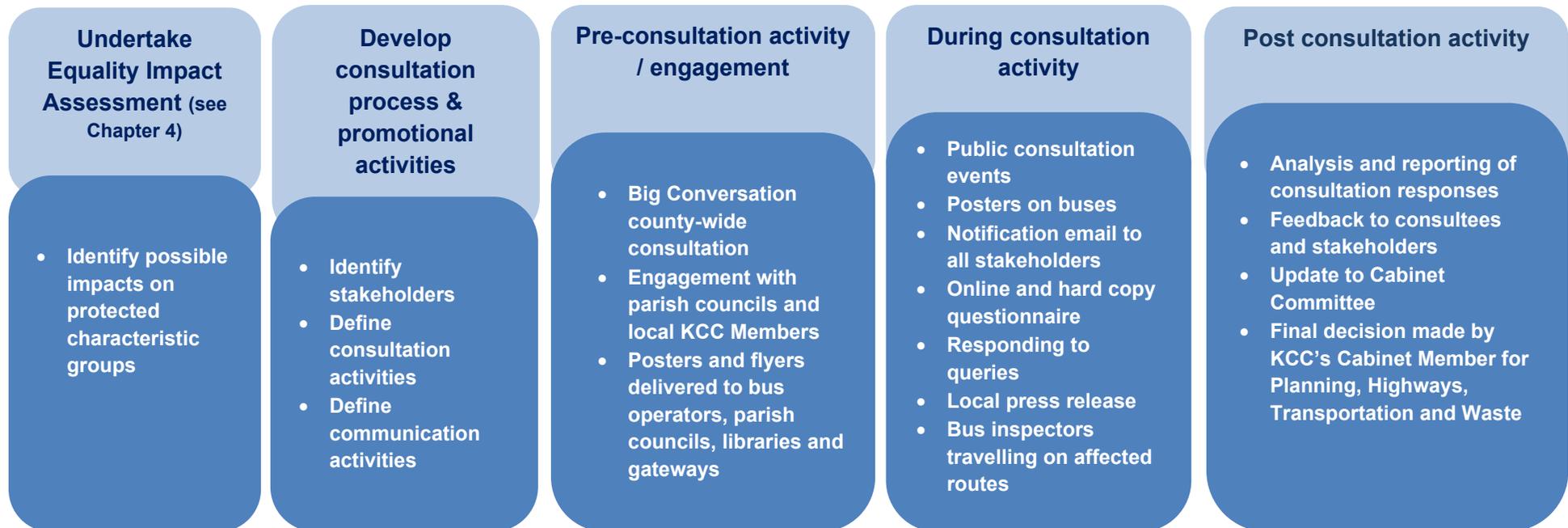


Figure 2.1: The consultation process

2.1. Promoting the Consultation

The consultation process was developed with the aim of enabling local bus users, residents, community groups and other stakeholders to understand the detail of the proposal, to feedback on the approach adopted and to tell us of any particular impacts (positive or negative) presented by the changes to bus services.

The following promotional activities were undertaken to support the delivery of the consultation:

- E-mail to all known stakeholders, including; District and Parish Councils and registered parties on KCC's Consultation Directory who had expressed an interest in being kept informed of consultations regarding transport in West Malling.
- Press release and coverage in local newspapers.
- Posters and flyers placed on affected buses.
- Posters, flyers and consultation materials displayed at local libraries and gateways.
- KCC Public Transport Inspector travelled on affected services promoting the consultaion and answering questions.
- Two public drop-in events held in areas potential impacted by the proposals.
- A page on KCC's Consultation Directory on Kent.gov.uk.

Please note: materials are available for reference at www.kent.gov.uk/westmallingsbuspilot.

Parish Councils provided significant support to the promotion of the consultation ensuring materials were displayed in their communities and that residents were informed. The strong response level is testament to their hard work.

2.2 Pre-consultation Engagement Activities

- KCC officers engaged Nu-Venture to develop the proposals and understand the impacts.
- KCC officers met with local members and parish councils to develop the proposals and understand the impacts.
- The results of the Big Conversation consultation were used to develop the proposals.
- Equality Impact Assessments were developed to take account of further detail.

2.3 During Consultation Activities

The consultation launched on the 22nd of January for a four-week period. Several activities were undertaken during the consultation period.

Consultation material

A full consultation booklet with maps and timetables was created and available to read and to download from the consultation webpage: www.kent.gov.uk/westmallingbuspilot. A flyer summarising the proposals was created and distributed on buses, by a KCC Public Transport Inspector when travelling on services and through libraries and gateways. In addition, hard copies of the flyer and of the consultation questionnaire were made available at the two public events. All documents could be provided in the post on request.

The below table shows the number of times each document was downloaded from the consultation webpage.

Document	Downloads
Full consultation document	276
Consultation Stage Equality Impact Assessment	13
Word version of consultation questionnaire	23
Consultation poster	15
Consultation flyer	8

Feedback mechanism

People were asked to provide feedback via a consultation questionnaire, which was available online and in a paper version. The paper version was available through libraries and gateways, was distributed at the public events and by Public Transport's bus inspectors and was made available on request via telephone or e-mail.

Face to face engagement

During the consultation period, the local KCC Public Transport Inspector travelled on affected services, distributing flyers, booklets and questionnaires as well as responding to any questions about the changes and the reasons for them.

Consultation Events

Two public information drop-in events took place:

- 6th February 13:00 – 16:00 at East Malling Institute Hall.
- 7th February 09:00 – 12:00 at Ryarsh Village Hall.

These events were held in venues accessible to those using the directly affected bus services. KCC officers were available to explain the changes to residents and respond to any detailed questions. The event in East Malling attracted approximately 40 attendees and 12 attended the event in Ryarsh. East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council provided excellent support at the parish event in their village hall, helping to manage high levels of attendees.

3. Response Profile

This chapter summarises the number of consultation responses received and who responded to the consultation.

There was a total of **111** responses to the consultation:

- Of the 111 responses to the consultation questionnaire, **74** were received online and **37** were hard copy responses.
- There were 6 e-mails or letters written to KCC. The comments have been added to the questionnaire responses and included in this report, but the respondents have not been included in the statistical information.
- The responses were analysed together to give an overall picture of the attitude towards the proposals. All responses have been collated and summarised in section 5.

Q1. Please tell us in what capacity you are completing this questionnaire	No. of responses
Yourself	93
Representative of local community group	0
As a Parish/Town/District Council	5
On behalf of a business	0
On behalf of a charity	0
On behalf of a friend or relative	10
Other	1

Table 3.1: Respondent Groups

Respondents were asked if they were current service users of the 58 service Addington-Maidstone. Of the 111 responses:

- 93 were current users
- 11 were not current service users

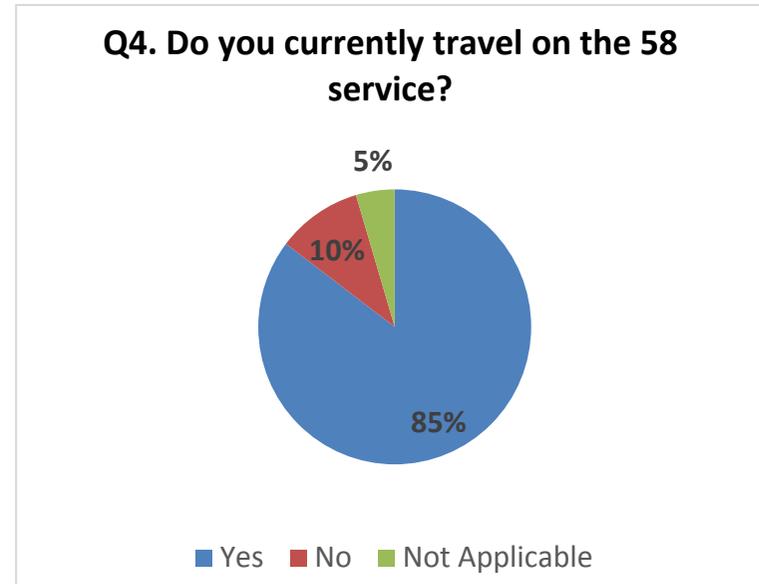


Figure 3.1 Service Groups

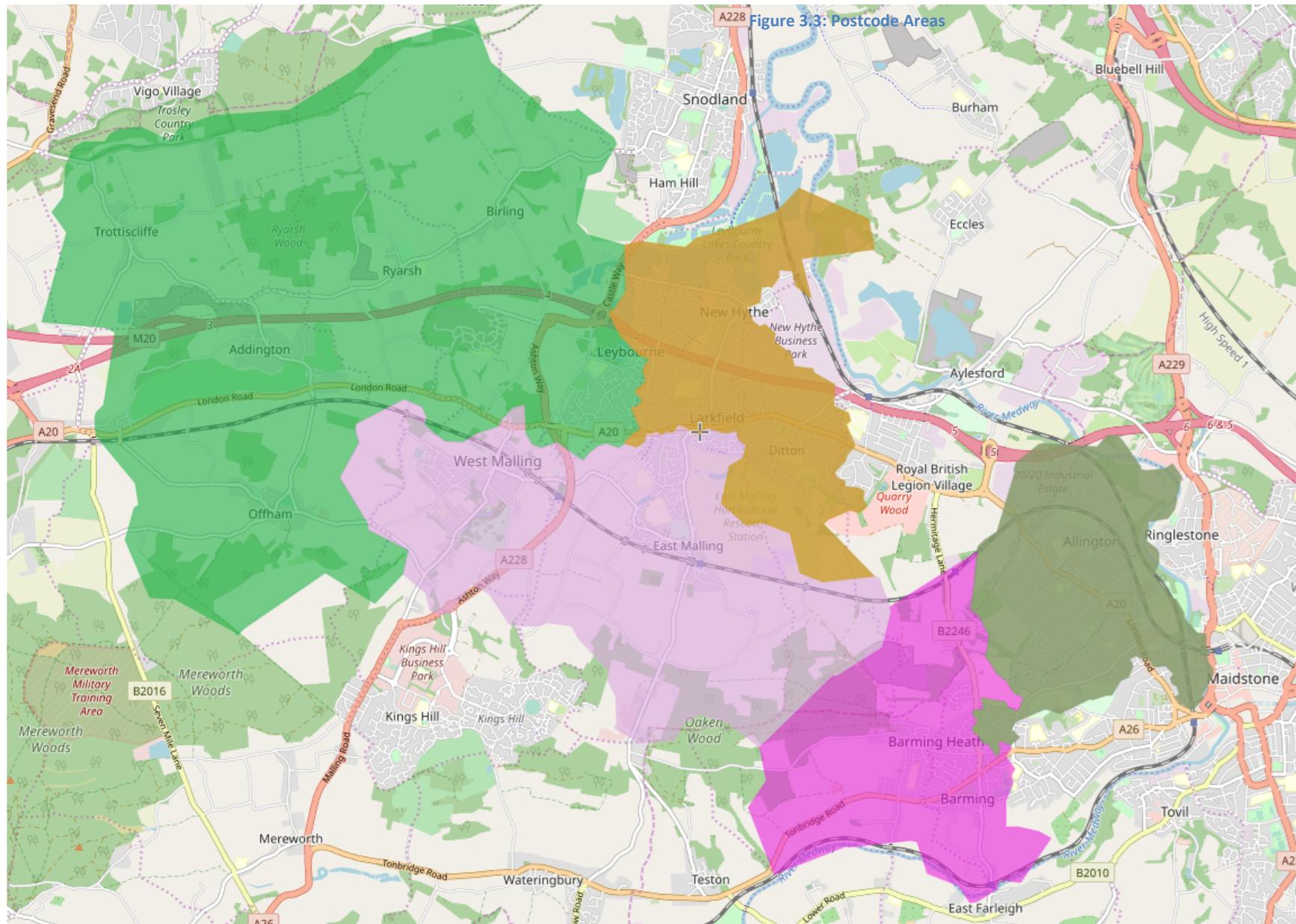
Table 3.2 on the right shows the breakdown of responses by postcode. These areas are visible below on Figure 3.3.

Analysis shows that there was good and widespread awareness of the consultation along the route of the existing and proposed service 58.

There are a few results in postcode areas which are not on the 58-bus route and which are not displayed on the map below.

Q2. Please tell us the first five characters of your postcode	No. of Responses
ME196	41
ME195	38
ME206	14
ME160	3
ME169	1
TN91S	1
TN10	1

Table 3.2 Postcode Groups



ME19 6

Respondents were also asked if they travelled using a concessionary travel pass. 110 people answered this question

Q3. Do you travel using any of the following bus passes?	No. of Responses
Older Persons (English National Concessionary Travel Scheme)	72
Mobility Impairment (English National Concessionary Travel Scheme)	9
Companion (English National Concessionary Travel Scheme)	2
Young Persons Travel Card (YPTP)	4
Kent 16+ Travel Card	1
KCC Free School Bus Pass	0
No, I do not use any bus passes	19
Not applicable	6

Table 3.4: Concessionary Travel Passes

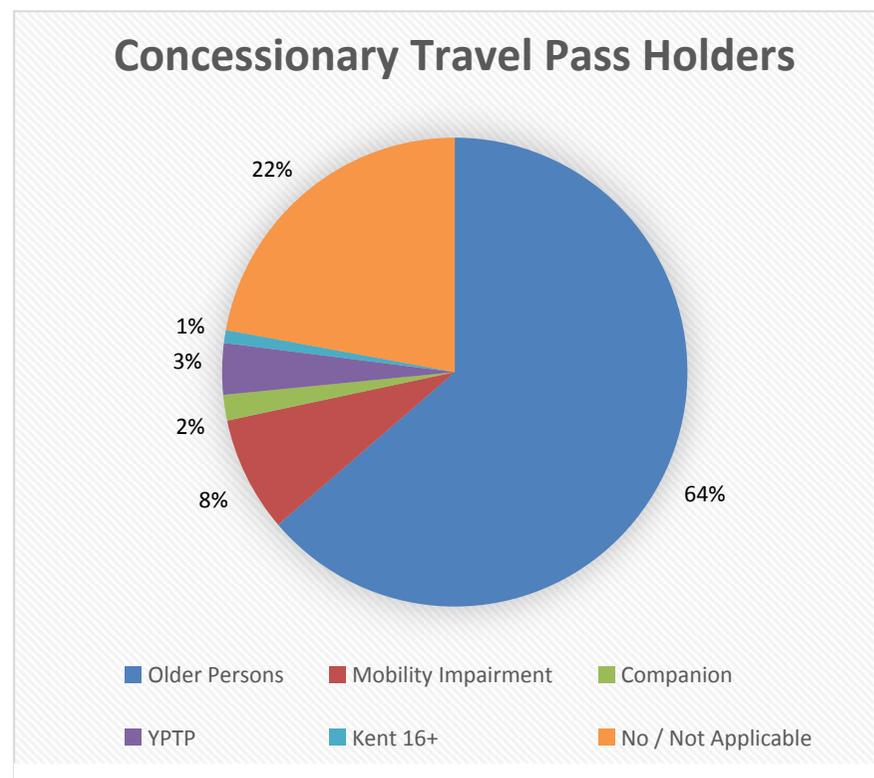


Figure 3.4: Concessionary Travel Passes

4. Equality, Accessibility & Demographics

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) provides a process to help us understand how the proposals may affect people based on their protected characteristics (age, disability, sex, gender identity, race, religion / belief or none, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and carer's responsibilities).

We carried out an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on the proposals to identify how people may be impacted. This document made available as part of the consultation and was downloaded **13** times from the consultation webpage.

The EqIA is available to view at www.kent.gov.uk/westmallingbuspilot. We will use the feedback gathered from the consultation to update the EqIA for the detailed design.

The following steps were taken to ensure the consultation was accessible to all:

- In addition to the consultation being available online, two events were held at accessible venues to provide the opportunity for people to view the material and ask detailed questions. Hard copies of the online

questionnaire were available and staff on hand to provide support.

This was particularly important to ensure the consultation was accessible to people who could not or did not want to access the consultation online.

- Hard copies of the consultation summary and questionnaire were available in libraries and gateways and made available on affected bus services.
- KCC's local Public Transport Inspector travelled on affected services, distributing material, explaining the changes proposed and answering questions.
- All publicity material included a phone number and e-mail address for people to request hard copies and alternative formats of the consultation material. Word versions of the consultation booklet, EqIA and questionnaire were provided to ensure accessibility of documentation to consultees using audio transcription software.

Of the protected characteristics identified within Equalities legislation, our Equality Impact Assessments identified; Disability and Pregnancy & Maternity as being more adversely affected by changes to bus services than other (non-protected) groups. It also identified Age and Carers as being more positively affected by the changes.

As such, analysis of the demographics of the responses focus on these areas.

4.1 Respondent Demographics

The following section documents the demographics of the respondents. This data was collated using the 'More About You' questions in the questionnaire. Not all respondents answered these questions. As passenger data is not collected on bus service, analysing if these response levels are representative of service users is difficult.

Elderly passengers account for around 50% of respondents and those with disabilities account for around 20%. Around 70% of passengers traveling on this service use ENCTS passes. This suggests they are appropriately represented

4.1.1 Q12 Age

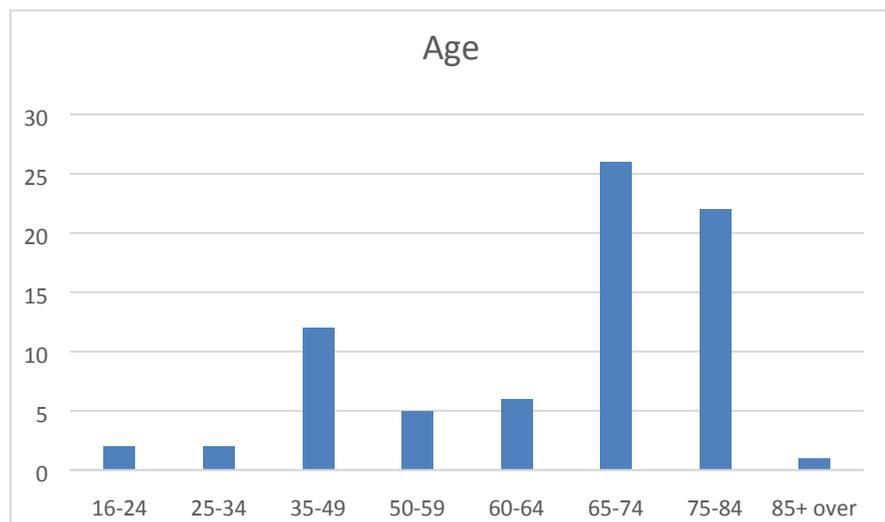


Figure 4.1: 'Age'

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents' age. Over 64% were over 65 years old.

4.1.1 Q10 Gender

- 70% of respondents are women
- 30% of respondents are men

4.1.2 Q14 Disability

- 29 respondents considered themselves to be disabled.
- Of those that stated they considered themselves having a disability, the impairments that affected each respondent are shown in Figure 4.2.

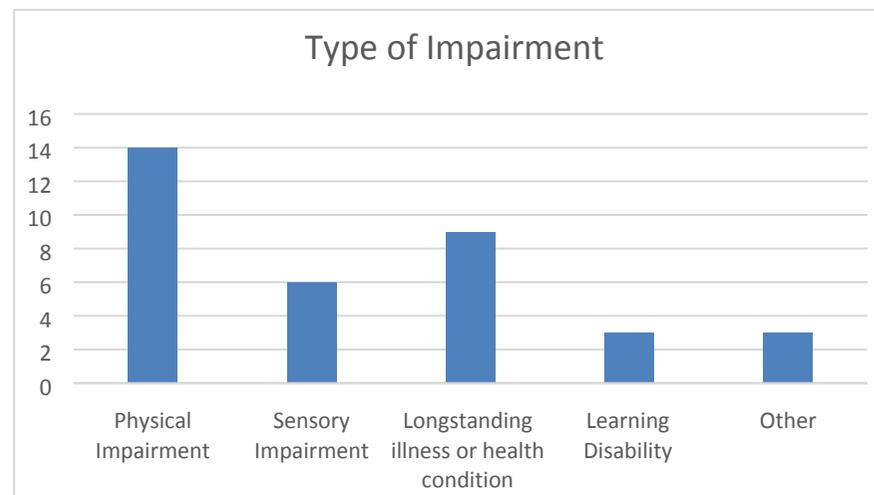


Figure 4.2: 'Disability impairments'

4.1.3 Q15 Carer responsibilities

Responders were asked to identify if they were a Carer. Of the responses received, 66 responded no or preferred not to say. 16 respondents identified themselves as a Carer, as identified in the chart below:

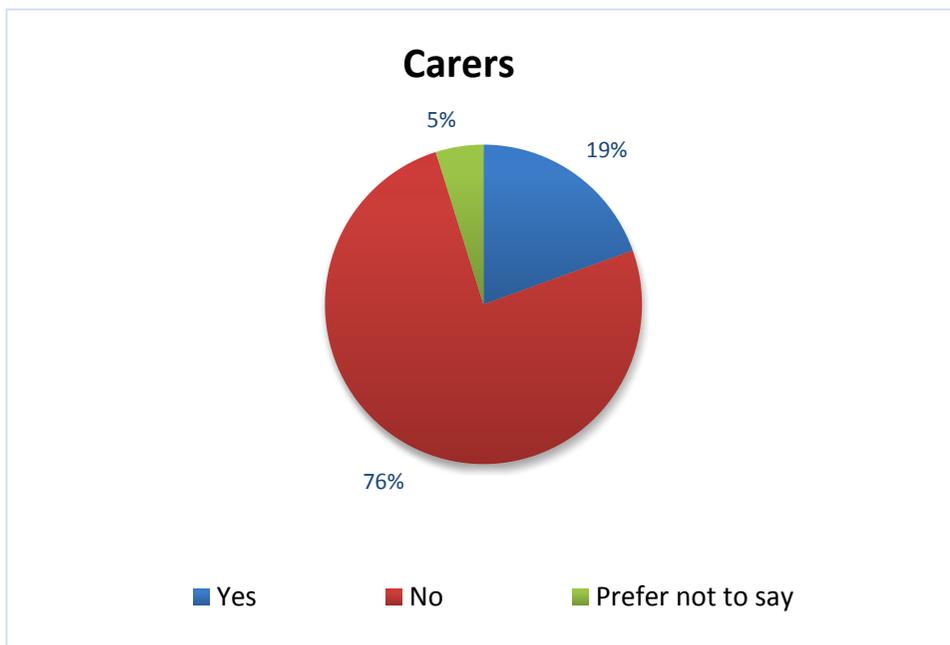


Figure 4.3: 'Carer Responsibilities'

4.1.4 Q9. Other Equality Impacts

Respondents were invited to provide comments on the Equality Impact Assessment completed at the consultation stage and of any particular impact from an equality and diversity perspective. The comments received are summarised below.

Equalities impacts were also captured in Q5b, Q6b and Q7. These responses have been recorded in the relevant sections and have fed into the EqIA conclusion.

There were 32 responses to this question, which have been divided into themes. Six of these comments did not identify either a protected characteristic or an impact and have not been included below.

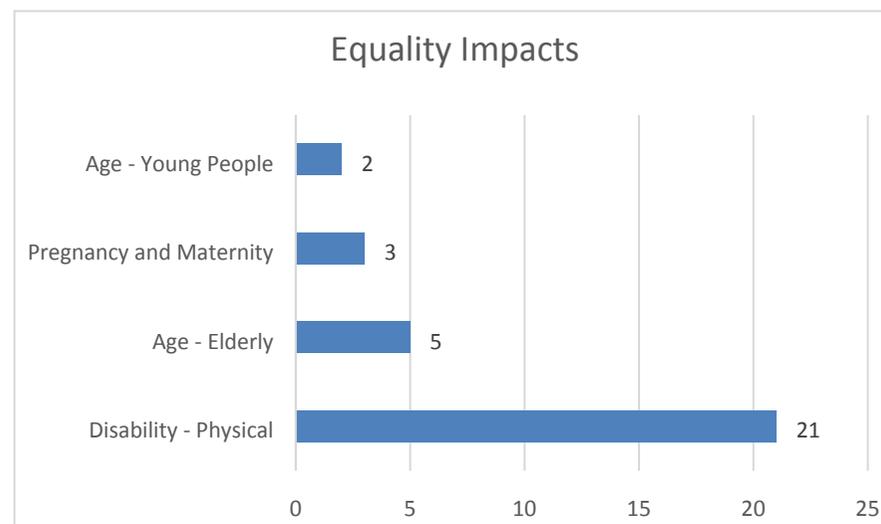


Figure 4.4: 'Equalities Impact by response levels'

Theme	Typical Comments
Impact on Disability – Physical	<p><i>“Have trouble walking would mean getting on and off four bus for one trip it’s hard enough getting on to one bus let alone four rely on the bus to get about for shopping and visiting friends”</i></p> <p><i>“I have very bad knees and back due to arthritis and this restricts my walking”</i></p> <p><i>“Due to mobility problems, more changes would put more pressure on my joints than I care to have”</i></p>
Impact on Elderly	<p><i>“It discriminates on ... the elderly as they are less likely to be able to cope with the longer journey times”</i></p> <p><i>“ The proposed changes would impact on the senior residents in this area”</i></p>
Impact on Pregnancy and Maternity	<p><i>“Proposal 1...will, also, make life more difficult for parents with small children who have to use this service”</i></p>
Impact on Young People	<p><i>“For children going to a Maidstone school this would mean they would have to change buses”</i></p>

Table 4.1: ‘Equalities Impacts by comments’

Table 4.1 Equality Impacts by Theme

4.2 EqlA Conclusion

High proportions of elderly responders and 28 responders considering themselves to be disabled have been identified in Section 4.1. In addition, 16 responders identified themselves as having carer responsibilities in response to question 15 in the questionnaire. All of these protected groups were identified by initial EqlAs as potentially being more affected by changes to bus services than other cohorts of society and the volume and proportion of responses from these groups would appear to confirm this.

In addition, 70% of responses were identified as being from female respondents suggesting that women are perhaps also more affected by bus service changes. It is thought that this could stem from a greater reliance on the bus for women where those in the over 65 age cohort may have outlived a spouse who was previously the sole driver in the household.

Whilst the initial EqlA identified pregnancy and maternity as a protected group who may be more affected by changes to bus services, there was minimal feedback from this group, so it is difficult to draw any conclusions from this analysis.

Section 5.3 (below) seeks to analyse the extent to which respondents' views varied dependent on whether they formed part of one of the protected groups of; age, disability or carer. A key part of this analysis was to understand how the negative impacts of having to change buses and the positive impact of increasing service frequency impact these groups overall.

Consideration of some of the open comments (Q5b, Q6b and Q9) provided has allowed for a more detailed breakdown of the impact of these proposals on those with a disability. This has allowed for the Equality Impact Assessment to be updated with greater detail.

Full copies of updated Equality Impact Assessments are attached as an appendix.

5. Consultation Results

5.1 Q5a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the changes we have proposed for Proposal 1 to terminate at Martin Square, Larkfield for onwards transfers to Maidstone Town Centre?

There were 109 responses to this question.

- 82% of respondents disagreed with Proposal 1
- 9% of respondents agreed with Proposal 1
- 9% of respondents either did not know or neither agreed or disagreed with Proposal 1

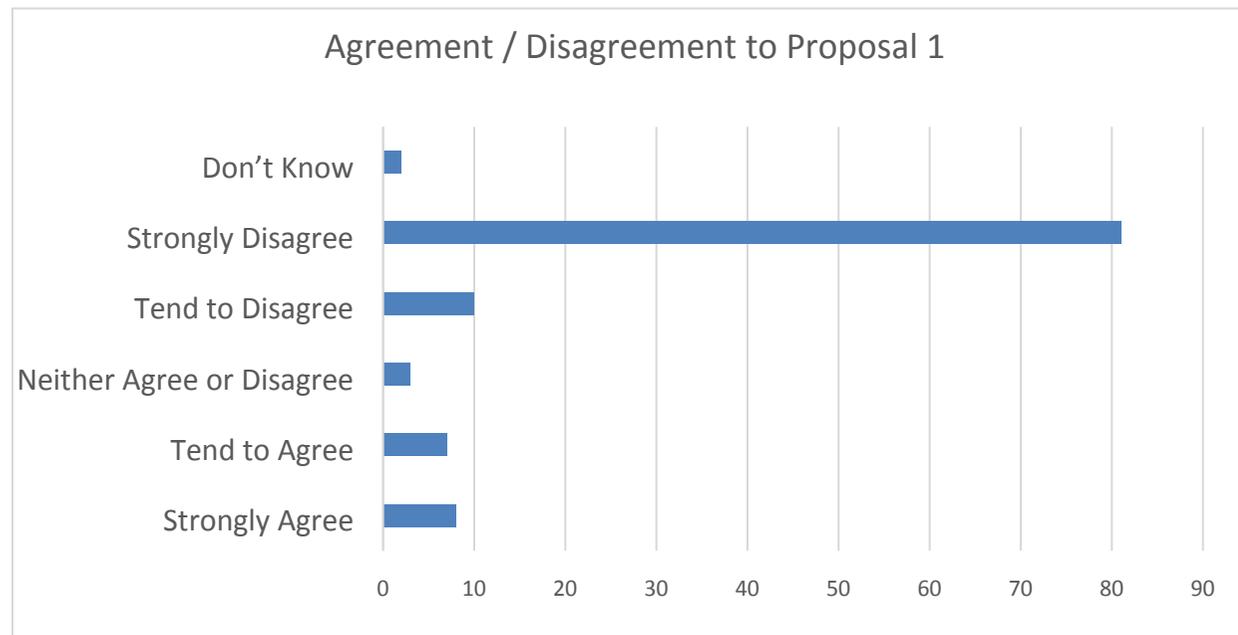


Figure 5.1: Respondents answers to Q5a

5.2 Q5a - further analysis

To further our understanding of the reasoning behind why respondents agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes, we completed some analysis looking at respondent age, disabled status or carer status affected their view of the proposal.

5.2.1 Q5a – Age breakdown

The figures below compare the responses to question 5 by those over the age of 65 against those under the age of 65 to determine if there is any fundamental difference of view dependent on age. Analysis identifies a very similar position regardless of cohort with similar majorities of responses in each instance disagreeing with the approach adopted.

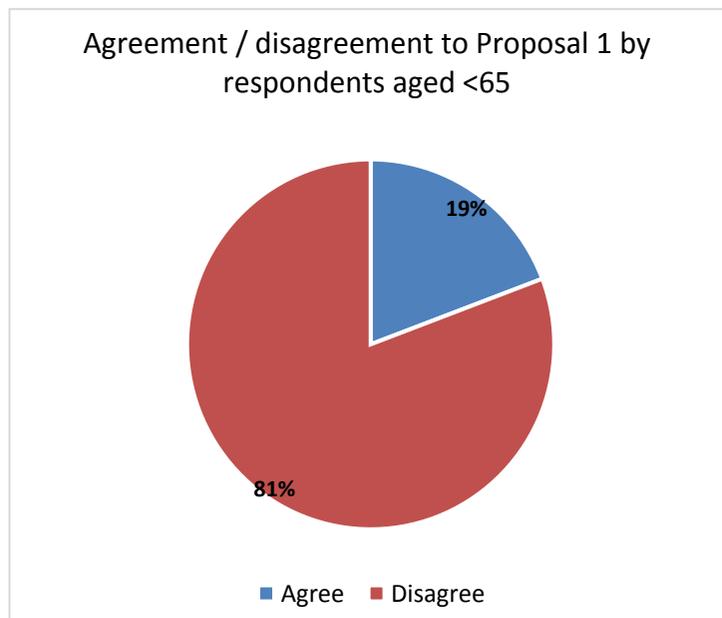


Figure 5.2.1: Respondents answers to Q5a by those under the age of 65

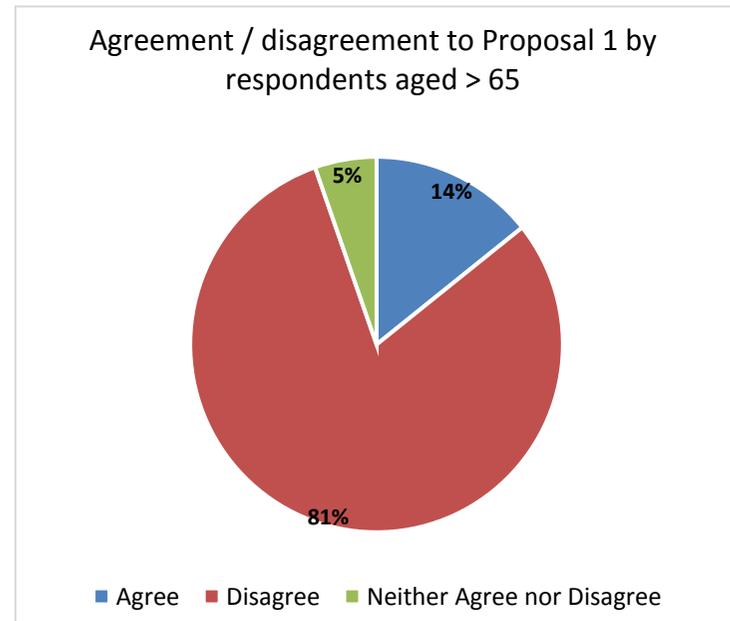


Figure 5.2.2: Respondents answers to Q5a by those over the age of 65

5.2.2 Q5a - Disabled breakdown

28 respondents identified themselves as disabled. The figures below compare the responses to question 5 provided by those respondents identifying themselves as disabled against those not identifying themselves as disabled. Comparison shows higher levels of disagreement to the approach adopted by those identifying themselves as disabled, which could suggest a greater impact on this group consistent with the concerns identified within initial EqlAs.

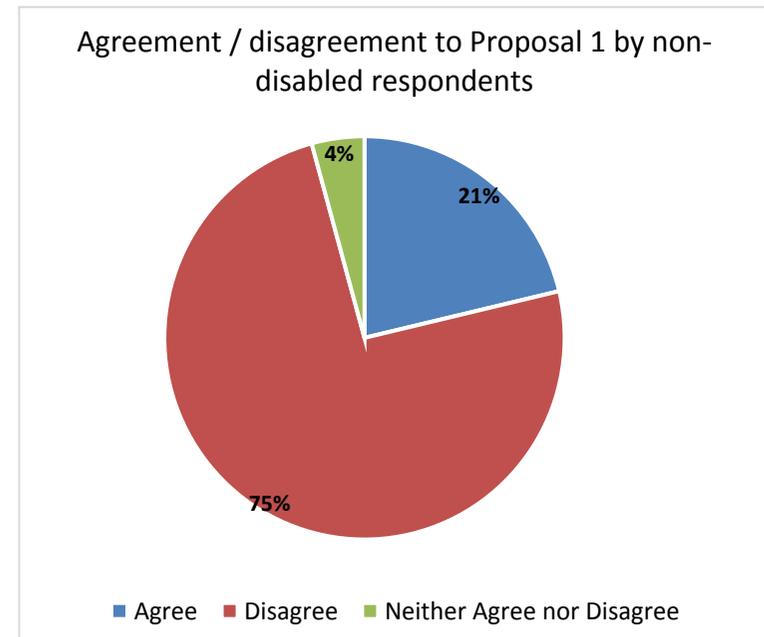
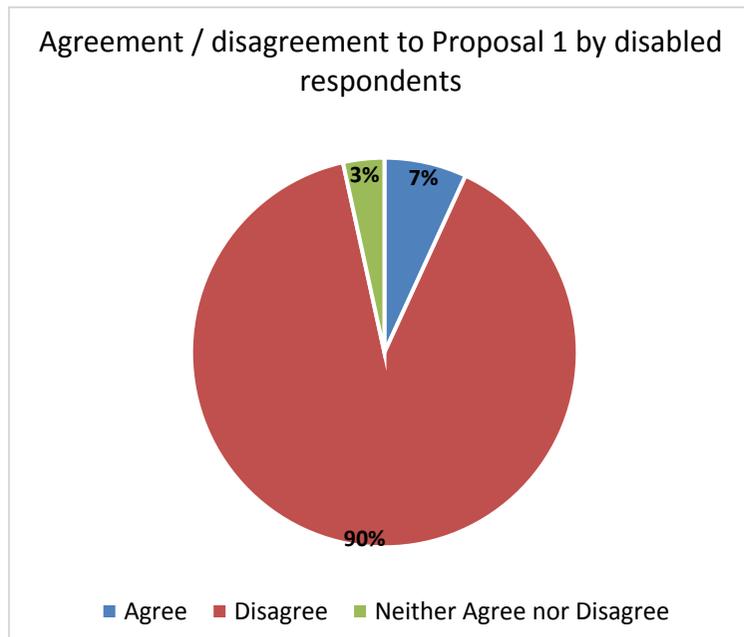


Figure 5.2.3: Respondents answers to Q5a by those identifying themselves as disabled

Figure 5.2.4: Respondents answers to Q5a by those identifying themselves as not disabled.

5.2.3 Q5a - Carer breakdown

16 respondents identified themselves as having a Carer responsibility. The figures below compare the responses to question 5 provided by those respondents identifying themselves with a responsibility as a Carer against those without this responsibility. Comparison shows similar levels of disagreement to the approach adopted by those identifying themselves as having a responsibility as a Carer.

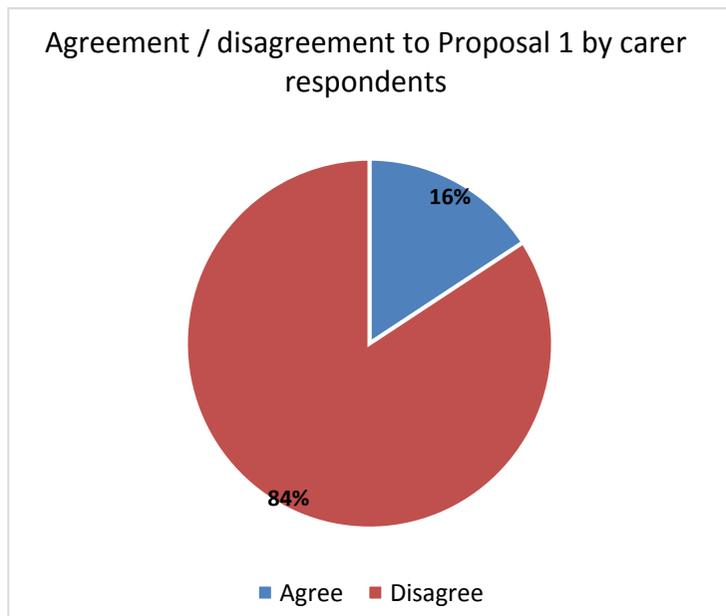


Figure 5.2.5: Respondents answers to Q5a by those identifying themselves as having a responsibility as a Carer

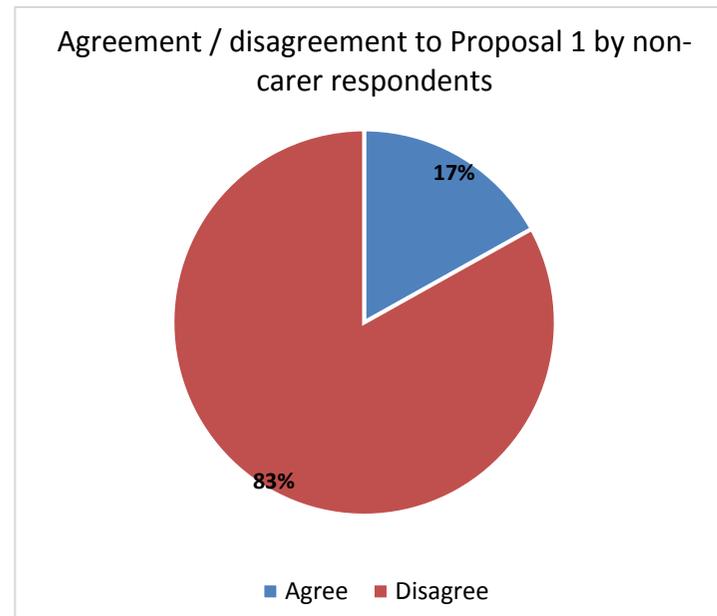


Figure 5.2.6: Respondents answers to Q5a by those identifying themselves as NOT having a responsibility as a Carer

5.3 Q5b. Please add any comments you have on Proposal 1 to terminate at Martin Square, Larkfield

There were 57 responses to this question.

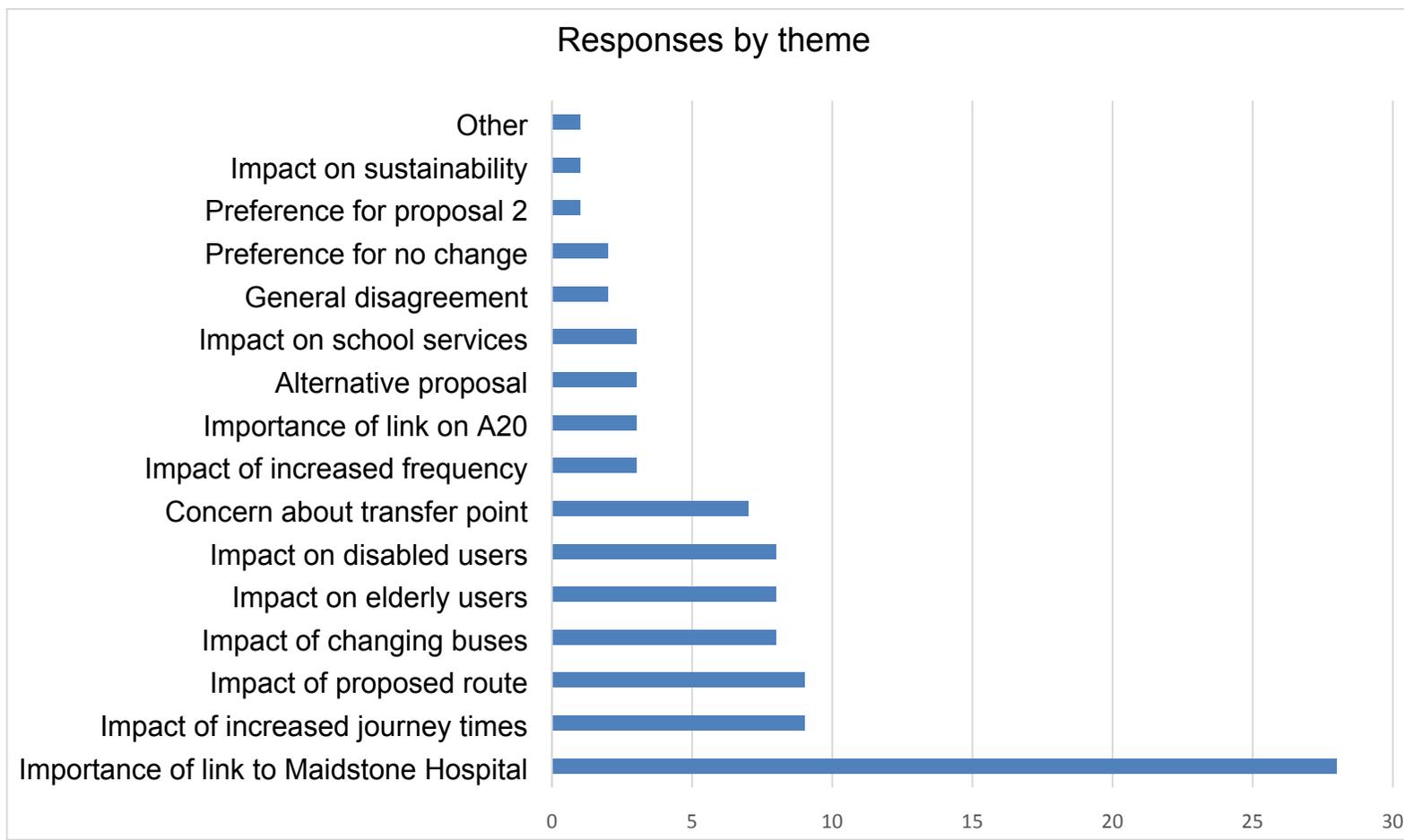


Figure 5.3.1: Themes to open questions by proportion (Q5b)

Theme	Number of comments including each theme	Example of feedback
Importance of link to Maidstone Hospital	28	<i>I would think most people use the 58 to get to the hospital The most important destination is the hospital</i>

		<i>Using 3 buses to get to the hospital is not satisfactory The 58 is the only bus serving the hospital from the villages around West malling This would mean a much more complicated journey for people wanting to go to the hospital</i>
Impact of increased journey times	9	<i>Has a longer journey time, especially returning from Maidstone This will add time to my journey</i>
Impact of proposed route	9	<i>The 58 service would bypass Queens Road/Maidstone Hospital. Proposed route ... is very restricted due to parked vehicles. It is also a very busy road</i>
Impact of changing buses	8	<i>hanging around at bus stops in bad weather, waiting for buses that are late or don't turn up It means waiting twice for buses both ways</i>
Impact on elderly users	8	<i>It means waiting twice for buses both ways. Not good when elderly. Most people who do or will use the 58 are elderly and its more strain on them</i>
Impact on disabled users	8	<i>this will impact most heavily on the elderly, infirm and disabled I have trouble with my eyesight and have to visit maidstone hospital often, so this service is not suitable for me</i>
Concern over transfer point	7	<i>I do not use any of the facilities at Martin Square Requires passengers to cross over the road to catch their connection to Maidstone.</i>
Impact of increased frequency	3	<i>In favour of the regularity of the service (hourly during the day), increased frequency</i>
Importance of link on A20	3	<i>I tend to disagree with this option only because I prefer the other.</i>
Alternative proposal	3	<i>we need a bus service that is much more regular and starts earlier and finishes later.</i>
Impact on school services	3	<i>having to change buses ...causes an even longer journey for them [school children]</i>
General disagreement	2	<i>Stopping a vital service is disgusting</i>
Preference for no change	2	<i>The service as it is No 58 East Malling to Maidstone Town Centre</i>
Preference for proposal 2	1	<i>Would make it more difficult and time consuming to change at Wealden Hall for a direct bus to Maidstone as people do at present</i>
Impact on sustainability	1	<i>Increase fare cost to KCC due to involving 3 buses each way to Maidstone Hospital</i>
Other	1	<i>Ref. real time info. this has not worked at the Wealden Hall stop for years.</i>

Table 5.3.1: Themes to open questions by example (Q5b)

5.4 Q6a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Proposal 2 to terminate at Maidstone Hospital for onwards transfers to Maidstone Town Centre

There were 108 responses to this question:

- 75% of respondents agreed with the proposal
- 23% of respondents disagreed with the proposal
- 2% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed

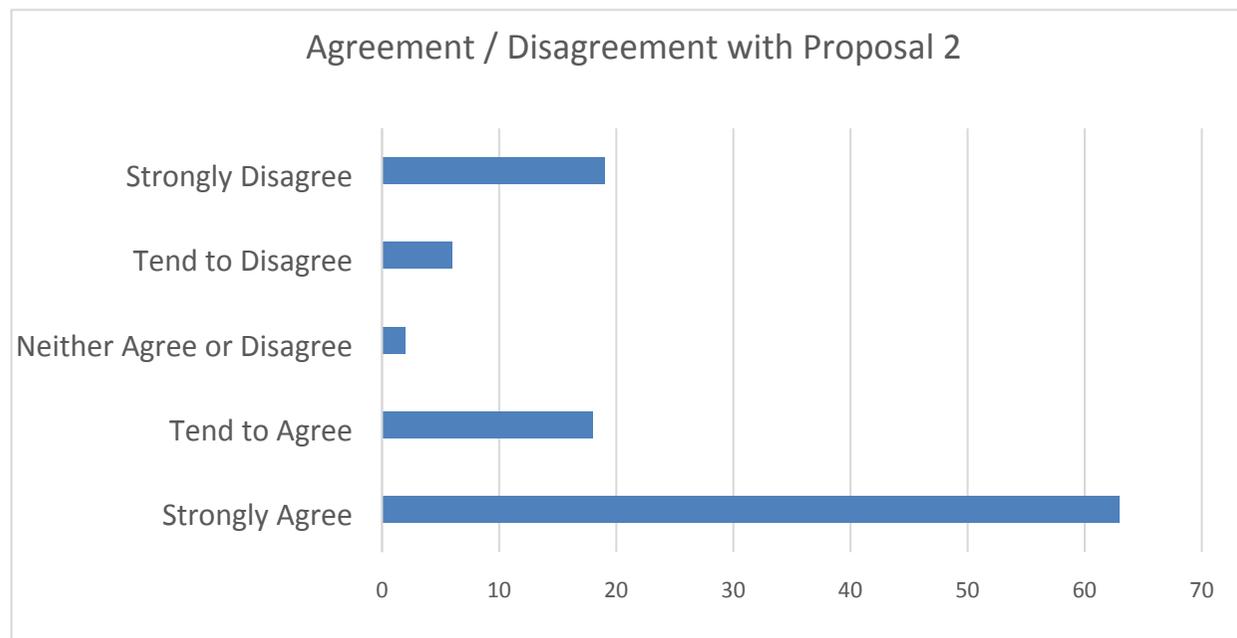


Figure 5.4: Respondents answers to Q6a

5.5 Q6a - further analysis

To further our understanding of the reasoning behind why respondents agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes, we completed some analysis looking at whether the respondents' age, disabled status or carer status affected their view of the proposal.

5.5.1 Q6a – Age breakdown

The figures below compare the responses to question 5 by those under the age of 65 against those over the age of 65 to determine if there is any fundamental difference of view dependent on age. Analysis identifies that those over the age of 65 are more likely to agree with the proposal. This could suggest that the positive impact of increasing journey frequency (particularly to the hospital) outweighs any negative impact associated with changing buses.

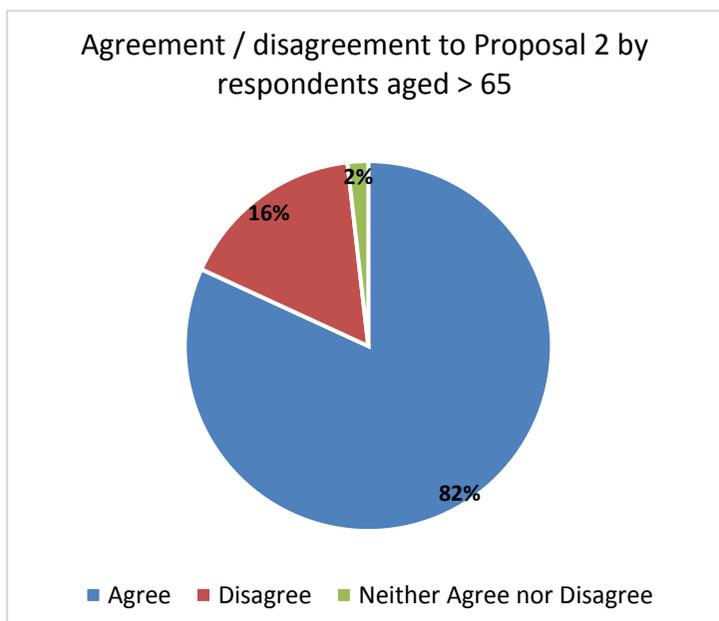


Figure 5.5.1: Respondents answers to Q6a by those over the age of 65

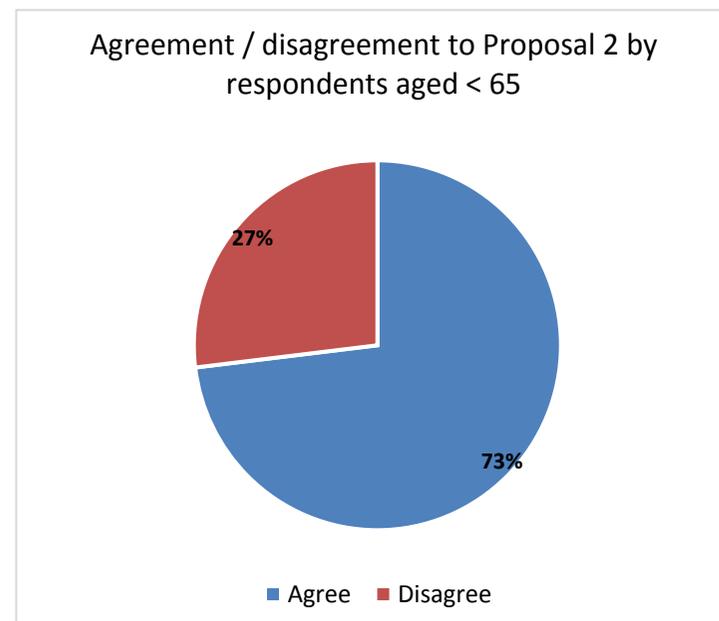


Figure 5.5.2: Respondents answers to Q6a by those under the age of 65

5.5.2 Q6a - Disabled breakdown

28 respondents identified themselves as disabled. The figures below compare the responses to question 6 provided by those respondents identifying themselves as disabled against those not identifying themselves as disabled. Comparison shows similar levels of agreement to the approach adopted by those identifying themselves as disabled, which could suggest the positive impact of more frequent buses, particularly to the hospital, outweighs the negative impact of having to change vehicles.

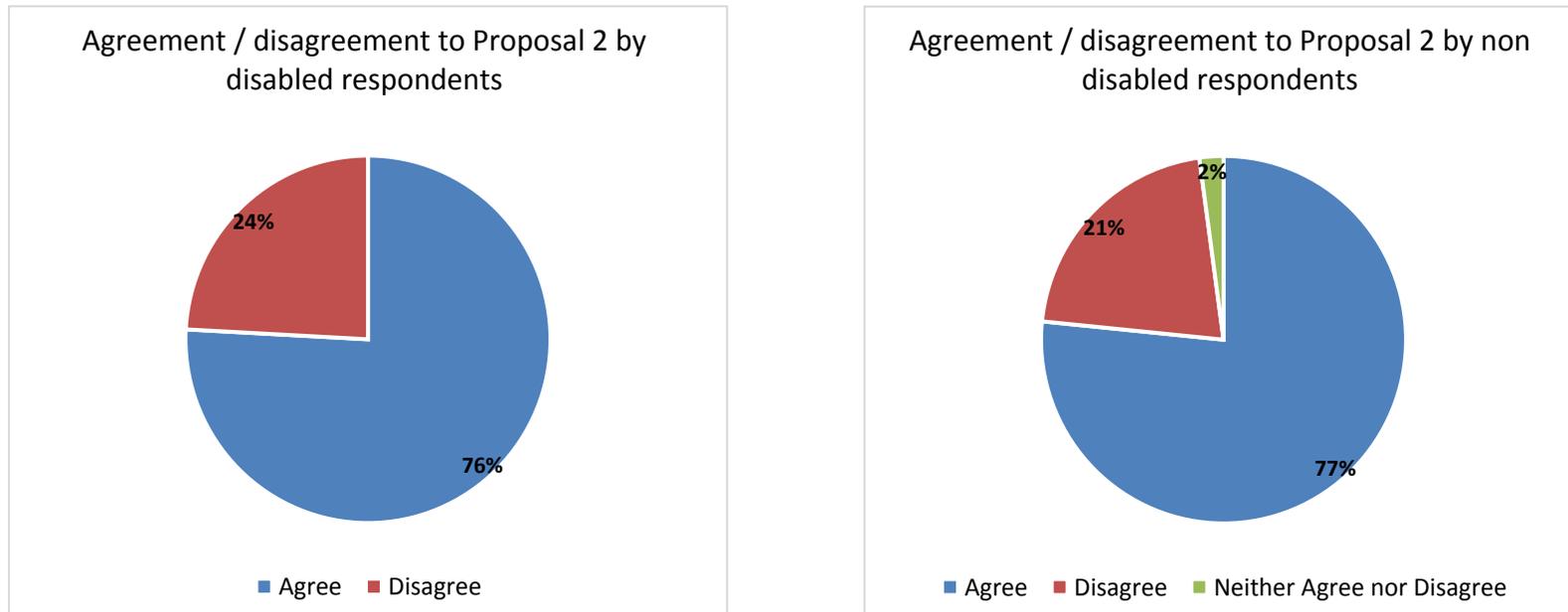


Figure 5.5.3: Respondents answers to Q6a by those identifying themselves as disabled

The initial Equality Impact Assessment specifically identified physical disability as potentially being more negatively affected by these proposals. 14 individuals with a **physical impairment** responded to the consultation 11 (79%) agreed and 3 (21%) disagreed with Proposal 2. Whilst this is a small sample size, there is again a similar level of agreement.

5.5.3 Q6a - Carer breakdown

16 respondents identified themselves as having a Carer responsibility. The figures below compare the responses to question 6 provided by those respondents identifying themselves with a responsibility as a carer against those without this responsibility. Comparison shows significantly higher levels of disagreement to this proposal by those identifying themselves as having a responsibility as a Carer. This could suggest a greater impact on this group.

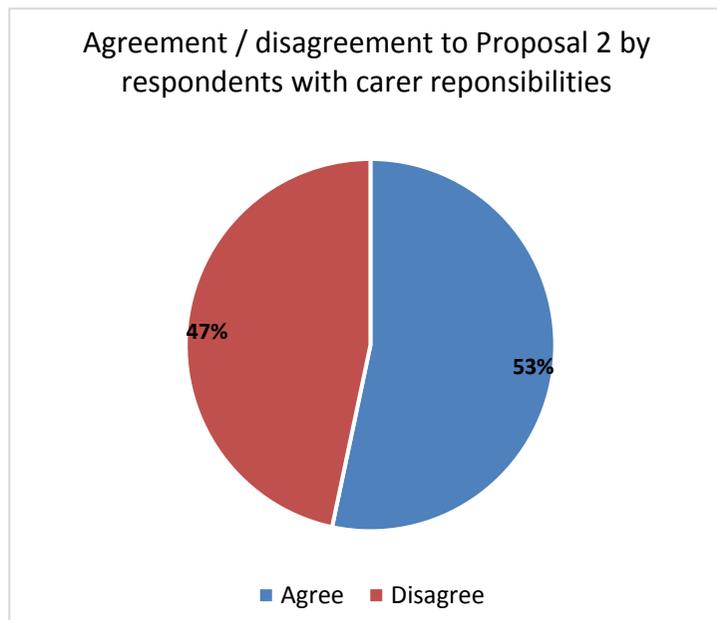


Figure 5.5.5: Respondents answers to Q6a by those identifying themselves as having a responsibility as a Carer

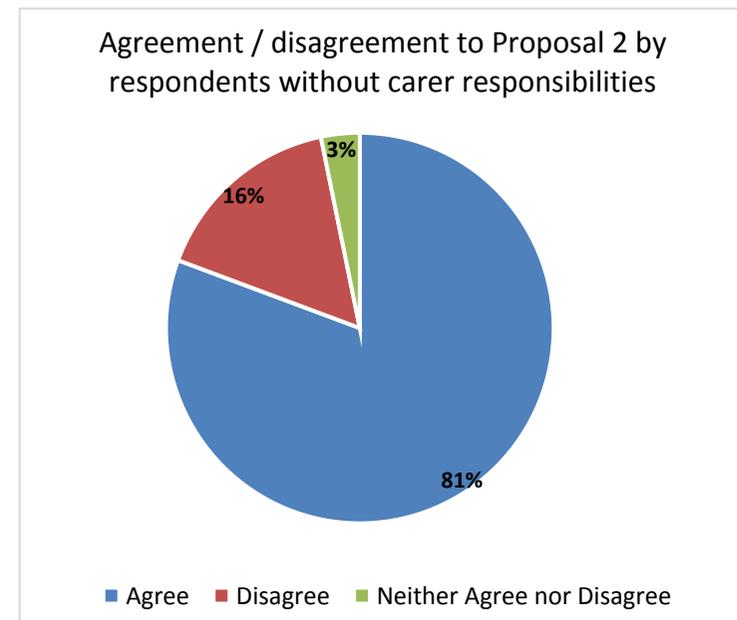


Figure 5.5.6: Respondents answers to Q6a by those identifying themselves as NOT having a responsibility as a Carer

5.6 Q6b. Please add any comments on the Proposal 2 in the box below

There were 73 responses to this question. Some responses addressed more than one theme.

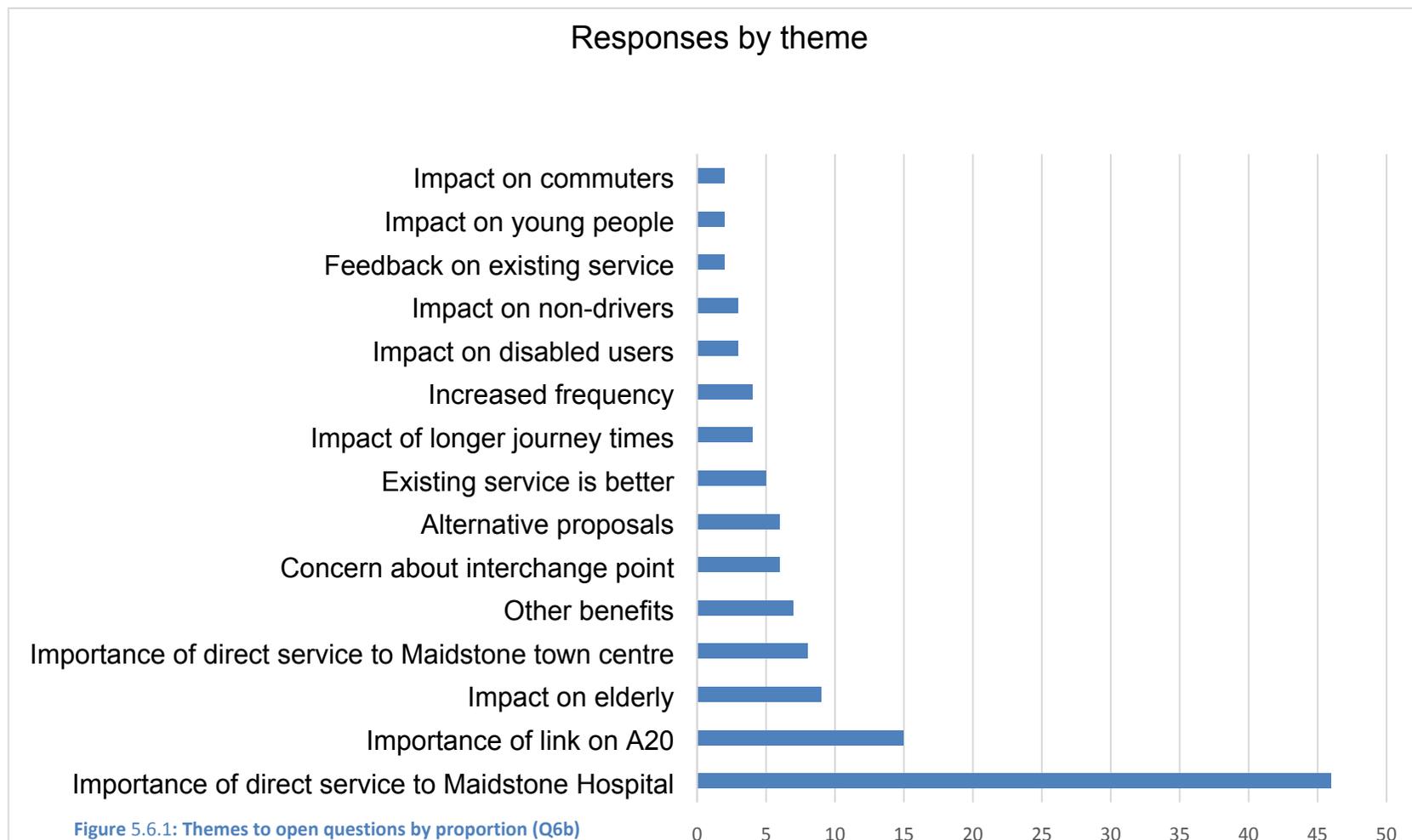


Table 5.6.1: Themes to open questions by example (Q6b)

Theme	Number of comments including each theme	Examples of comments
Importance of Direct Service into Maidstone Hospital	46	<i>If ill or needing treatment at the hospital a direct route is important Would help if you need to visit the hospital I think our area needs a direct bus to Maidstone Hospital There is a few people who I know that has to go to the hospital atleast twice a week We need to keep a direct bus service to the hospital</i>
Importance of transfer on A20	15	<i>For journey to Maidstone, changing at Wealden Hall is convenient If bus transfer is opposite the Wealden Hall instead of Maidstone Hospital - Is same journey time to Maidstone as Proposal 1 I have caught this bus at the Morrisons Larkfield bus stop where people have got off the 58 bus and then transferred to a 71 to go into Maidstone.</i>
Impact on Elderly	9	<i>Changing buses for old people is not the way forward I think this proposal is more doable for senior citizens</i>
Importance of direct service into Maidstone Town Centre	8	<i>I need a service that goes straight through to Maidstone To break the route ...would be a great disadvantage to the existing route 58</i>
Other Benefits	7	<i>Gives more options to passengers It has the advantage of providing a service along Hermitage Lane</i>
Concerns over changing buses	6	<i>Please ensure there will be sufficient connections at Maidstone Hospital I am concerned that the serious traffic issues around Hermitage Lane will make it difficult for people to judge journey times and passengers could be stranded</i>
Alternative Proposals	6	<i>Timetable unsuitable for morning appointments and has a 3-hour gap (1516 to 1758)</i>
Existing service is best option	5	<i>I would prefer the bus to continue to go to the town centre.</i>
Impact of longer journey times	4	<i>dislike the much-increased end to end journey time</i>
Increased frequency	4	<i>We need a more regular bus service</i>
Impact on disabled users	3	<i>I for one go to the hospital on a regular basis for cancer treatment</i>
Impact on non-drivers	3	<i>there are lots of people who do not drive in and around the villages</i>
Feedback on exsiting service	2	<i>The drivers ... look out for us all The service on the 58 is not overly reliable</i>
Impact on young people	2	<i>seems quite irresponsible & still won't help their [the kids'] commute</i>
Impact on commuters	2	<i>I work at Maidstone hospital and rely on this bus service alone to get me there and back</i>

Q5a and Q6a Combined Results

Table 5.6.2 below shows the combined results of responses to the proposals.

- Over 63% of responses fall into the bottom left quartile where there is agreement with proposal 2 (Addington – Maidstone Hospital, Barming), but disagreement with proposal 1 (Addington to Martin Square, Larkfield).
- Around 19% of responses disagreed with both proposals, representing respondents who wanted no change to the existing service.
- Under 10% respondents agreed with both proposals.
- The least common response was for agreement with proposal 1 and disagreement with proposal 2.

		Proposal 2				
		Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
Proposal 1	Strongly Agree	4	2	-	-	2
	Tend to Agree	1	3	1	2	-
	Neither Agree or Disagree	3	-	-	-	-
	Tend to disagree	5	2	-	3	-
	Strongly disagree	50	10	1	1	17
		10	4	67	20	

Table 5.6.2: Responses to both Proposal 1 and Proposal 2 (Q5a and Q6a)

5.7 Q7. Do you prefer one of the proposals we have presented?

108 people responded to this question. Of these:

- 5 preferred Proposal 1 – Martin Square, Larkfield
- 79 preferred Proposal 2 – Maidstone Hospital, Barming
- 21 had no preference. This group correlates strongly with the cohort that disagreed with both proposals.
 - 18 disagreed with both proposals in Q5a and Q6a
 - 3 agreed with both proposals in Q5a and Q6a
- 3 were unsure

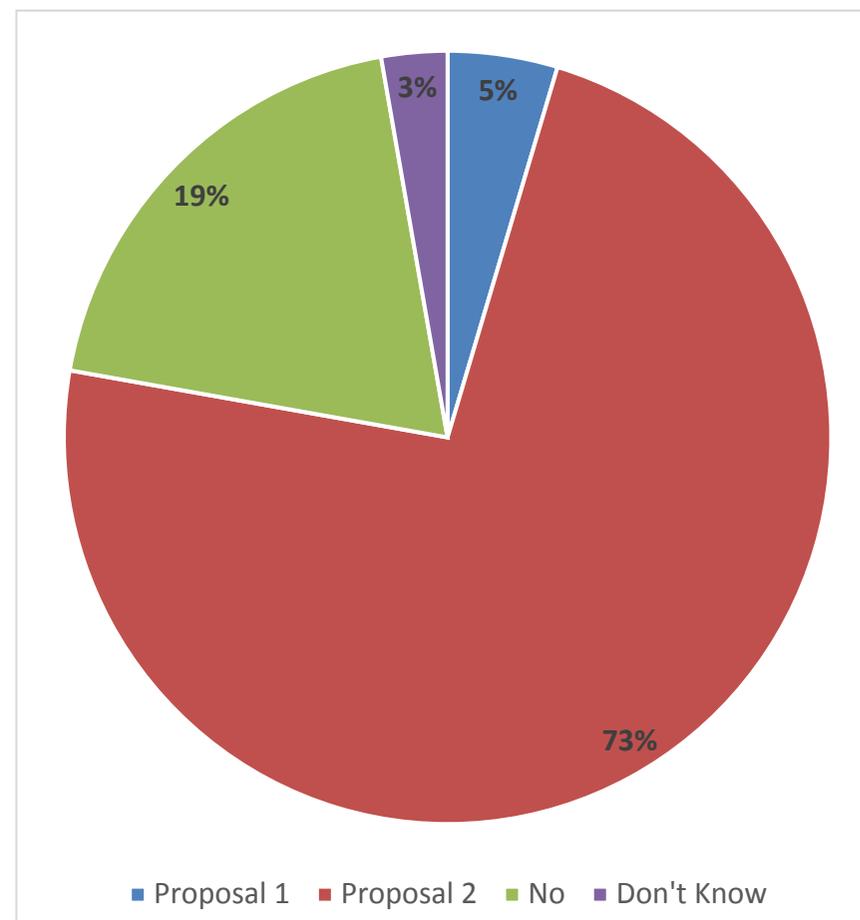


Figure 5.7.1: Preference between Proposals (Q7)

5.8 Q8. Please add any comments you have on the proposed changes to the 58 service in the box below.

This question was answered 56 times.

- 14 comments repeated themes from the individual's response to either Q5b or Q6b and have been excluded from this analysis.

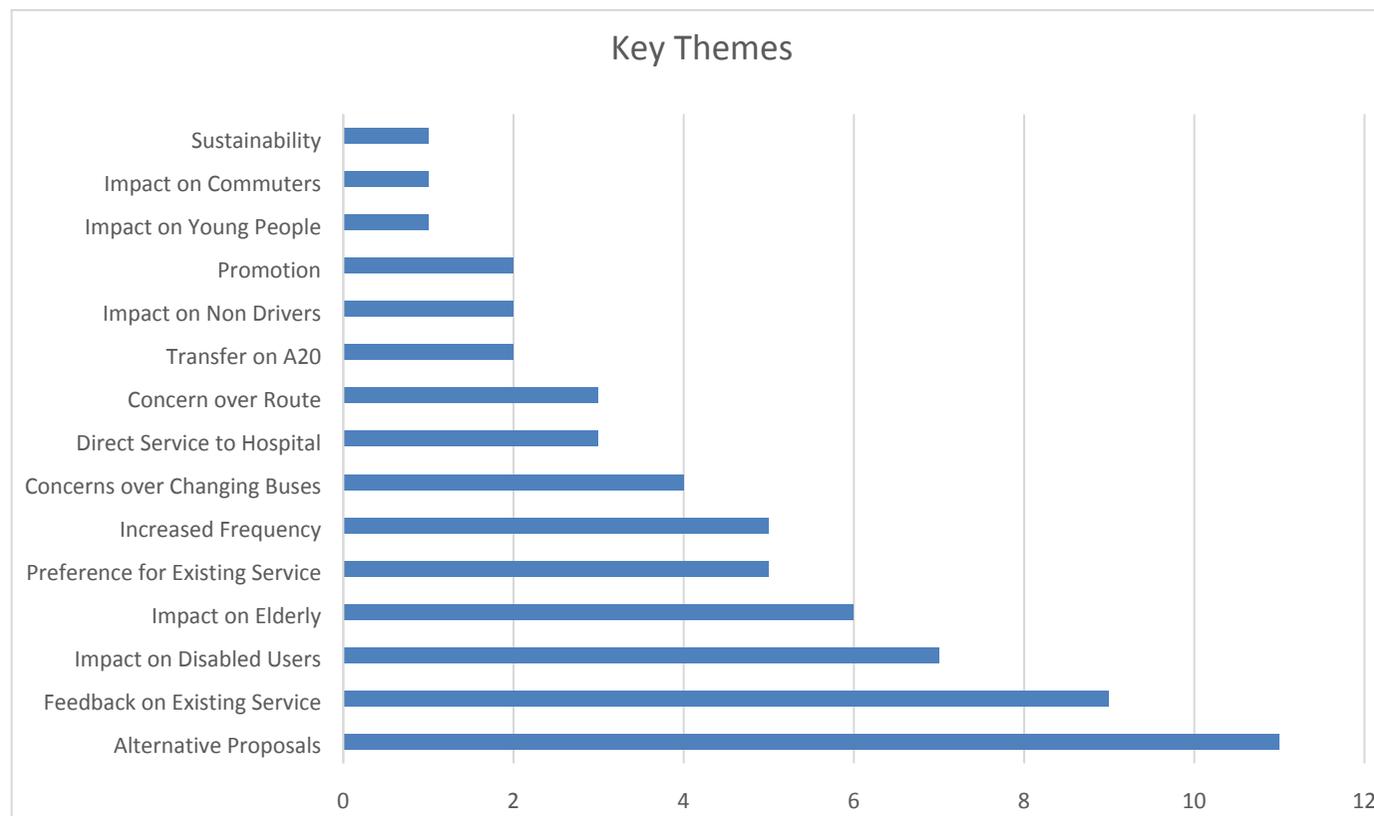


Figure 5.8.1: Themes to open question by response levels (Q8)

Theme	Number of comments including each theme	They said.... (typical comments)
Alternative Proposals	13	<i>If the issue is money for this service, why not run a smaller bus public transport to Pembury from the West Malling area would also be desirable Keep the existing service but review the times the service runs. Early morning for commuters and school children and back again in the evening are vital Could it be diverted to serve the new houses at Leybourne Chase?</i>
Preference for Existing Service	9	<i>I would prefer the service to stay as it is at present. It isn't great but most practical and easier</i>
Feedback on Existing Services	4	<i>The drivers are compassionate and friendly Bus times should be properly publicised</i>
Impact on Disabled Users	8	<i>With a disability - it will be much more difficult to go to Maidstone</i>
Impact on Elderly	6	<i>Thought needs to be given to the provision of public transport generally to the hospital particularly for the elderly</i>
Increased Frequency	5	<i>this will give a more frequent and regular service on the route towards Maidstone than the present 58 bus.</i>
Changing Buses	3	<i>The volume of traffic leaving Maidstone after 3:30pm could mean missing a connection Service 71, In short there are 4 buses an hour but effectively only 2 per hour as the 71 often bunches with the 71A</i>
Hospital	3	<i>Most use the hospital</i>
Charging	3	<i>There should be no additional cost for travel by different carrier Could an opportunity be provided for a direct cash contribution to be made per journey</i>
Proposed Route	3	<i>If the 58 is truncated with either of these options it will remove 3 services into, and 5 services out of, Maidstone each day for concessionary passengers in Queens Road</i>
Transfers on A20	2	<i>changing elsewhere along the A20 would lead to shorter journey times and is already the preferred option for passengers wishing to do so</i>
Impact on non-drivers	1	<i>The very people who will be needing this transport will suffer and if they haven't got a car are likely not to be able to afford a taxi.</i>
Sustainability	1	<i>I can't see how it is going to save money when you will have buses running every hour.</i>

Table 5.8.1: Themes to open question by example (Q8)

6. Next Steps

On the 19th March, this report and an updated EqIA will be considered by the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee, who will be asked to make a recommendation about whether to progress with the changes proposed or not.

The consultation report, EqIA and recommendation will be considered by the Cabinet Member for Highways Transportation and Waste who will ultimately make the decision.

This decision and this report will be communicated via our website www.kent.gov.uk/westmallingsbuspilot and we will send a notification to those who have provided contact details throughout the process, including stakeholder organisations.

If the decision is taken to make changes to services these would likely take effect from Monday 3rd June. In advance of this, notices would be placed on all affected bus services notifying passengers of the change.